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## COMMUNICATED.

Mr. Editor:—In your paper of last week I observed a pleasant notice of the examinations of schools which took place in our village a few days since. In the concluding paragraph you give some of us a good humored hint, that we were rather remiss in not giving more general notice of these interesting movements beforehand. I presume the suggestion will do no harm, and should another occasion of a similar kind occur it will doubtless be complied with, so far as the native schools are concerned. The reason, and probably the only one why previous notice of the native school celebration was not given through the *Polynesian*, was the fact that it was a "new measure" in this neighborhood, and there was some uncertainty as to what it would prove to be; a hoax or a *hoike*. As the thing turned out we should have been glad to have seen all the friends of education in the Pacific present, both at the Charity School and the native.

Some further remarks in regard to both may not be uninteresting to your readers, especially to those at a distance. The public are already acquainted in a good measure with the origin and history of the Oahu Charity School. It was established some seven years ago, and has been sustained by the patronage of the foreign residents in Honolulu, together with the contributions of benevolent visitors at the islands. The school now contains about eighty pupils, consisting chiefly of half-cast children and youth, born on the islands, and being the offspring of foreign fathers, destined to exert a great influence in the Hawaiian nation. Until the establishment of this institution, the education of this class of children was almost entirely neglected, but now they appear to be in a fair way to become fitted for stations of usefulness and respectability in life.

The school from its commencement has been under the care and instruction of Mr. and Mrs. Johnstone, and doubtless owes its present high degree of prosperity in a great measure to their skill and industry, as guardians and teachers of youth.

At the examination on Oct. 27, which I as well as others witnessed with much satisfaction, the exercises of the pupils were in spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, geography, and grammar. It is certainly speaking moderately, to say the evidences of improvement exhibited on the occasion were very creditable, both to the teachers and the pupils. Most of the pupils in this school are the children of Hawaiian mothers, and have been accustomed to speak the Hawaiian tongue almost exclusively from their infancy. It is emphatically their mother tongue. To teach them the English language, then, which is one object of the school, must be a work of time, toil and patience. It is to these children, in fact, a foreign language and peculiarly difficult of acquisition, from the circumstance that many of the English sounds as well as the entire idiom, are altogether new and strange to a Hawaiian; quite as much so as those of the French to a Dutchman or an Englishman. This has been one of the most stubborn obstacles Mr. and Mrs. Johnstone have had to contend with from

the commencement of their labors in this institution. But it was pleasing to observe the good degree of proficiency manifested by the more advanced classes of both boys and girls in the use of the English. One class even parses simple sentences in English with much correctness and apparent ease.

The Oahu Charity School house is a neat, well arranged, and well furnished building, with a convenient location, but it is quite too small for the accommodation of eighty scholars. It is so contracted even as to oblige the teachers to divide the school into two parts, having the boys in the forenoon and the girls in the afternoon. This is not only very inconvenient but very uneconomical. Will not its patrons and friends remedy the evil?

On looking around the room, it appeared well furnished with cards, maps, books, slates, &c., of an excellent character and in sufficient variety. The books for reading appear to be of a decidedly Christian character, and therefore calculated to teach the best lessons of wisdom to the youth who daily ponder their pages.

On the whole, the Oahu Charity School is an interesting institution, and in a flourishing state. We regard it as more than an ornament to Honolulu; it is a blessing. Let it be sustained; yea let it be enlarged and furnished with every possible facility for doing its work, and unless its character changes sadly for the worse, which may God forbid, it will richly repay all the efforts and expenditures of its friends. It will scatter around our village those treasures in comparison with which silver and gold are but dust and ashes.

We now come to speak of the native schools for children and youth in Honolulu and its vicinity. At the celebration last week, seventeen schools, containing in all a few over 700 children, were convened for examination, and other exercises of the day. The scene was one of interest and calculated to call into exercise all the better feelings of mankind in behalf of the rising generation in our community. Callous indeed must have been the heart that would not have responded "Amen," to the concluding sentence of Capt. Wilkes' brief but very appropriate address to the children, "May God bless you all." Yes, may God bless you all, beloved children, for in this prayer is included the sum total of all good, was the involuntary response of one heart at least. I hope it was of all. No more appropriate aspiration could be uttered on such an occasion. When the children and youth of the land are blessed, the nation is blessed in them, and who is so willing, so able, so desirous of blessing the "rising race," as God to whom the prayer was directed?

Only about an hour was devoted to the examination, as this was merely a secondary object of the occasion. The exercises of the children were confined to specimens in reading, geography, arithmetic, natural history and singing. The gentlemen present expressed themselves much gratified with the evidences of improvement exhibited in the different schools.

As might be expected, the select schools of Mr. and Mrs. Knapp, the one containing fifty-four sprightly and promising young girls, and the other thirty-five boys, and the family school for the young chiefs, under the care of Mr. and Mrs.

Cooke, attracted most attention. As Capt. Wilkes came in when the examination was about closing, he expressed a desire to see one of the youth present resolve a sum in arithmetic, on the black board. The following was at once propounded to a boy in Mr. Knapp's school, and ciphered out with the greatest ease and readiness: "What is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a week?" The following was also given to a young girl in Mrs. Knapp's school, and done without the least embarrassment: "If the distance from Boston to Providence be 40 miles, how many times will a carriage wheel, the circumference of which is 15 feet, 6 inches, turn round in going that distance?" If it is said, "All this was cut and dried beforehand," and merely thrown out "parrot-like," I reply, there surely was previous preparation, very thorough too, and where was there ever a school examination worth a jot, without previous preparation? What is the object of such examination, but to ascertain how much the scholars have learned? But will any one teach a parrot to resolve one of the abovementioned sums on a black board?

These two select schools are evidently well initiated in the common branches of an elementary education. They read well, write legibly, and are quite at home in geography. The pupils of both sexes are generally much interested in their studies, and what is almost surprising, they are regular in their attendance at school, notwithstanding the absence of any law to require it, or, in most cases, of parental authority or advice to urge it; this, too, amidst the distracting influences and many temptations of Honolulu. But the fact is, their books, their teachers, their school exercises and school companions, have won their affections, and where this is the case, no law is needed to bring children to school. They are a law unto themselves.

The addresses of Captains Wilkes and Hudson, and Dr. Palmer, closed the scene in the chapel with the most happy effect. The impression will not soon be erased from the minds of those 700 children. Their eyes, ears, and in not a few instances, their mouths too, were all open to secure every word that was uttered. Capt. Hudson spoke in the parental strain of a patriarch addressing his own family: congratulating both parents and children on the respectability of their appearance, the many evidences of improvement they exhibited, not only in book learning, but in civilization; and exhorted them to be grateful to their instructors, to persevere in seeking knowledge, to cease to do evil, especially telling lies, and above all, to prepare for the solemn retributions of eternity.

In conclusion, came the neat, happy, off-hand address of my own quondam college friend, Dr. Palmer. The sentiments were well timed, and happily expressed. He pointed out the pursuits of knowledge, virtue, and religion, as the ways of wisdom, and the only sure path to prosperity and happiness; spoke of the academic scenes in which he and the one who stood by him as interpreter had been once associated, and the little expectation either of us then entertained of ever meeting on such an occasion as this on the other side of the world. But an over-ruling Providence, whose designs are in mercy

to men every where, has brought this about, and given you (the native children) a pastor and guide, to whom you will do well to take heed.

It may be in point here to remark, that the deep interest manifested by the commanders and many of the officers of the Squadron now here, in the welfare of the Hawaiian nation, is not confined to this occasion. We have had many opportunities of observing with satisfaction, these gentlemen throwing the whole weight of their influence on the side of virtue, of order, morality and religion. This is not said by way of flattery; far from it, but by way of commending that which is praiseworthy in itself, and of inviting still greater efforts on the part of these welcome strangers, to help on the work of improvement in the islands. They may do lasting and incalculable good by their counsel and example among the natives, especially the chiefs and leading men of influence. It is a remarkable fact, that since the arrival of the Squadron there has been a marked decrease of intemperance in my church and congregation. How to account for it I know not, unless it be through the pointed and well timed addresses of several of these gentlemen, to my people on several occasions. Neither is this the only instance of good that might be mentioned. But this is a digression, and we forbear to say more.

Of the procession and feast we need say but little. The former was a public spectacle, and needs no description. As to the latter, it was prepared by the Governor and the parents, in purely native style, except the Governor's own table, and consisted of a profusion of fish, pork, fowl and vegetables, served up in calabashes and leaves, with here and there an earthen plate, spoon or a knife and fork, all spread out on the mat floor, where the multitude were seated. The scene, as a whole, was a motly mixture of barbarism and civilization, in about equal proportions, and might be properly taken as a fit index to the state of society in general in these islands. One circumstance I believe made a considerable impression on all the strangers present, that was the noise. Never was there a bedlam more complete. The confusion of tongues at Babel could not exceed it. One, even, who is professionally familiar with the roar of cannon, complained that it made his head ache. When, however, all were seated and got fairly to eating, tranquillity was in some degree restored, for no one seemed to have time for any thing else but the business before him. The 'little multitude' seemed to be now quite as much interested, and I don't know but more so, in the feast as they had been an hour before in the addresses of the gentlemen. At the close of the feast all dispersed in quietness.

As to the propriety of such celebrations, I would only add, after having observed the practice for several years past on the island of Maui, they appear to have been attended with some trifling evils, but with many decidedly good results to our common schools. They tend to secure the attendance of the children at school, stimulate them to study, present a motive to parents to provide decent clothing for their children, call public attention to the interests of schools, and are expensive to no one.